

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety

**Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner: Facilitator of Cross-site Learning from the
Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative**

Grant Solicitation

February, 2006

Program Background

The Massachusetts legislature recently provided \$11 million for anti-gang grants through the Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative (Shannon CSI).¹ The Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS) is the lead agency for implementation of this anti-gang effort. To enhance the effectiveness of this initiative, EOPS announces the availability of up to \$250,000 in Byrne/JAG grant funds to share lessons learned across the sites and to assess and document the results achieved by the Shannon CSI grantees. A separate solicitation (available at www.mass.gov/eops) seeks Local Action Research² Partners to provide strategic, analytic, and research support to individual Shannon CSI grantees. Information on the intended roles and relationships among EOPS, Shannon CSI grantees, Local Action Research Partner grantees, and the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will be available at www.mass.gov/eops and at an information session for potential research grantees.

Goal of this Solicitation

EOPS recognizes that the Shannon CSI grant program is a significant new investment and represents a unique opportunity to study a variety of interventions applied by a diverse set of grantees in response to the problem of youth violence. The goal of this solicitation is to assure that the state learns as much as possible from this historic investment.

The scope of services described below represents a starting point. We anticipate working in close partnership with the chosen grantee to further develop and refine project goals. It is anticipated that a final scope of services will be agreed upon by both parties at the start of the grant period.

Scope of Services

EOPS will make available up to \$250,000 to gather and share knowledge on youth violence and to work with Local Action Research Partner grantees and Shannon CSI grantees to improve overall program success and outcomes. Specific areas of assistance will include:

¹ For more information on the Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative, see www.mass.gov/eops.

² Action Research is the term used by the National Institute of Justice to describe the process by which a researcher works in close partnership as part of a team to provide strategic thinking, critical analysis, and continuous feedback to improve program operations.

- **Task 1 – Facilitate collaboration and learning across sites.** The Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will help EOPS maximize the learning from the work of the Shannon CSI grantees, and will work closely with EOPS to develop the strategy for so doing. One element of cross-site collaboration will be a series of information sharing meetings among the Local Action Research Partners and the Shannon CSI grantees. These information sharing meetings will be conducted quarterly by the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner over the grant period and will address specific policy areas identified by the grantees, the expert panel (see below), or EOPS. Applicants should discuss in their proposals their additional ideas for fostering collaboration, information sharing, and cross-site learning.

- **Task 2 -- Convene expert panel.** Within 2 months of grant award, the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will convene a panel of experts on youth violence to advise EOPS on how to best leverage the Shannon CSI grants to achieve maximum benefit. This task is an important early step and will help to guide the future direction of the project. The panel may meet once or several times throughout the grant period, with the following goals:
 - Advise the EOPS on model approaches in addressing youth violence in other cities and states around the nation and the world. This should include a discussion of the current gaps in knowledge and recommendations for closing those gaps.
 - Help develop methods of measuring the success of the Shannon CSI grant program, both for grantee communities and for all communities facing youth violence problems across the Commonwealth. This might include describing what documents and deliverables could be produced by the various research partners to demonstrate or describe results of the Shannon CSI grant program. This discussion will inform the priority policy areas for interim publications and will help shape some of the goals of final report referenced in task 4 below.

The Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will document the proceedings of any formal meetings of the panel, and will also provide a policy maker summary. Applicants should discuss their ideas for how to best use the talents and resources of the expert panel to advance the state of knowledge on reducing youth violence in Massachusetts.

- **Task 3 -- Provide training to Shannon CSI grantees and Local Action Research Partners.** The Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will assist the EOPS in helping grantees to successfully launch their programs by providing training to the CSI grantees and Local Research Partner Grant recipients on a variety of topics, to include: successful collaboration strategies and techniques, keys to success for action research, using performance measures to improve program operations, etc. It is anticipated that four trainings will be conducted over the course of the grant period. Applicants should discuss the topics they recommend for training and the potential challenges in delivering training to multi-disciplinary teams.

- **Task 4 – Interim publications and final report.** Working with EOPS the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will develop four interim publications during the grant period and a final report. The interim publications will address policy and implementation topics of highest priority. The target audience for the interim publications is Shannon CSI grantees and the purpose of the interim publications is to

help grantees improve their program operations. In addition, at the conclusion of the grant period, the grantee will work with EOPS to produce a final report on the Shannon CSI grant program. The final report will be delivered to the EOPS and to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means describing the results achieved by grantees and the best practices that have been instituted as a result of the grant. EOPS and the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner grantee will together develop the outline for the final report. At the start of the grant period, the EOPS and the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner will work together with Local Action Research Partners to assess what data and information should be collected in order to be able to assess lessons learned and program outcomes at the conclusion of the grant period.

Evaluation Factors

Applications will be judged based on the following criteria:

- **Quality of the proposal.** Applications will be judged on the quality of their proposed approach and the degree to which the proposal reflects careful consideration of the possible implementation challenges. Other quality considerations include the feasibility of approach, the creativity of the proposed approach, and the potential for improving the state of knowledge on youth violence in Massachusetts.
- **Organizational experience.** Applications will be judged on the likelihood that the proposed lead organization can achieve successful results. Specific criteria include:
 - **Research experience.** Proposals must demonstrate experience working in the field of criminal justice, public safety, or related research areas.
 - **Experience working in collaborative approaches.** The Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative directs that grants be awarded to multi-disciplinary and collaborative approaches involving multiple stakeholders. Proposals must demonstrate an ability to work with multiple actors in a collaborative fashion and include a diverse range of perspectives.
 - **Experience working with public safety and community organizations.** Proposals must demonstrate experience working with public safety and community organizations, and must demonstrate an understanding of the challenges of applying research and analytical approaches in these settings and how those challenges will be addressed.
- **Management and organizational capability.** This program will require significant coordination and management. Proposals should address the level and variety of organizational resources available to the lead individual for the project, and how he or she will direct those resources in support of program goals.
- **Cost effectiveness of approach.** Proposals will be evaluated on their ability to provide Massachusetts with a cost-efficient approach to achieving results.

Application Format

Applications must include the following elements. Page limitations are indicated for each section.

Understanding of the Challenge (5 pages)

- Applicants should describe their knowledge of national trends in youth violence, community violence prevention efforts, and anti-gang strategies. Applicants should address their experience applying data-driven approaches to the area of youth violence reduction, and the challenges inherent in measuring success. Applicants should also discuss their experience with Action Research, addressing the challenges and their proposed approach to addressing those challenges.

Proposed Approach (5 pages)

- Applicants should describe the proposed approach both, for the program as a whole and for each task listed in the scope of services. This section of the proposal should detail both the proposed method and a discussion of expected challenges and proposed solutions. This section should also include a proposed project implementation timeline describing the associated level of effort for each task. Assumptions used in developing the level of effort should be included here.

Statement of Qualifications (5 pages)

- This section addresses the experience of the applicant in working with collaborative public safety efforts. Applicants should address the evaluation factors described above. The expertise and project management capabilities of key staff should be addressed. The EOPS will require a single point of contact for management of the grant, and the management and administration qualifications of the designated individual should be addressed. Organizational and administrative aspects of grant quality management should also be addressed, such as the ability to delivery quality products on an agreed schedule.

Estimated Project Budget

- Proposals should use the budget worksheet provided at www.mass.gov/eops. Applicants are encouraged to identify in their personnel cost section the role of each member of their team, using the following standard definitions, as appropriate to the proposed project team.

Role	Responsibilities
Project Director	Responsible for overall project direction and the quality and accuracy of all deliverables.
Project Manager	Responsible for day to day supervision and management of the project and the allocation of project resources.
Research Advisors	On an as needed basis will work with and advise the project.
Junior Researchers	Perform research, analysis, and data collection tasks.
Administrative Assistants	Assist with project coordination and management and the production of deliverables.

Resumes of Key Personnel (no page limit)

- A summary page should introduce the resume section, identifying the role of each member of the team.

Other Application Details

- **Eligibility** – Due to the Byrne/JAG funding guidelines, state and local government agencies are automatically eligible. Any other organization wishing to apply should contact Chris Pohl, EOPS Deputy General Counsel, at 617-727-7775 to receive instructions on how to be certified as eligible to receive federal grant funds.
- **Requirements.** The grant resulting from this solicitation will be funded from Byrne/JAG funds, and will carry with it all relevant federal funding requirements and restrictions. Matching funds will not be required for this grant. For more information on the Byrne/JAG grant program, see www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA.
- **Deadline** – An information session for potential bidders will be held in March, at a date and time to be posted at www.mass.gov/eops. Interested bidders may submit questions to Sarah Lawrence, EOPS Research Director at sarah.lawrence@state.ma.us. Responses to questions will be posted and updated periodically on the EOPS web site. **Final proposals are due to EOPS no later than 5pm on Friday, April 14, 2006.**
- **Grant period.** It is anticipated that EOPS will select the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner by May 15, 2006, and will enter into grant agreements with the successful bidder as quickly thereafter as practical. Grant period is anticipated to be eighteen months. Shannon CSI grants are anticipated to last one year beginning in the summer of 2006. However, to allow for the Statewide Youth Violence Research Partner grant to assess progress, this grant period will extend beyond the completion of the Shannon CSI grants.
- **Delivery instructions.** Applicants should submit five copies plus the original grant proposal. Completed applications are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, April 14, 2006. Emailed or faxed copies will not be accepted. Grant applications should be delivered to: The Executive Office of Public Safety, Attn: Sarah Lawrence, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 611, Boston, MA 02108.